

been known to shun the spotlight, his words and actions speak volumes about his dedication to all those who served.

For those who may not be familiar with some of his more notable legislative accomplishments, I would like the record to reflect the following list of his accomplishments during the six years that he served as Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs from 1995 to 2000. Working on a bipartisan basis in cooperation with veterans' service organizations, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs achieved significant legislative success on behalf of our Nation's veterans and their families. The following items only highlight what was accomplished during the six years of BOB STUMP's chairmanship.

VA Health Care Budget—For fiscal year 2000, Congress provided the largest budget increase for VA health care in history, \$1.7 billion.

Health Care Eligibility Reform—In 1996, under CHAIRMAN STUMP's leadership, Congress passed eligibility reforms that removed barriers to outpatient care and allowed greater flexibility to the VA so it could pay for care closer to where the veteran lives.

1998 Benefits Expansion—In 1998, Congress passed a significant benefits expansion totaling \$1.5 billion over five years for improvement to veterans' and survivors' education benefits and benefits for disabled veterans and surviving spouses of totally disabled veterans.

Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act—What has been called the Millennium Act is the most comprehensive veterans' benefits improvement legislation in decades. Some of the more significant provisions mandate nursing home and long-term care and allow the VA to pay for some emergency health care services.

Montgomery GI Bill Enhancement—Public Law 106-419 increased the value of the monthly education benefit by nearly \$100 per month to \$650. During the six years of Chairman Stump's tenure, the Congress increased the monthly benefit by 48 percent.

National Cemetery Expansion—Since 1997, 7 new national veterans' cemeteries have opened, including one in Oklahoma that was required by the Veterans' Committee as part of the Millennium Act. Under Chairman STUMP's guidance, Congress also required the VA to begin immediately the planning for 5 national cemeteries in Atlanta, Miami, Pittsburgh, Oklahoma, Sacramento, and Detroit.

Arlington National Cemetery—Legislation was enacted in 1999 to expand the boundaries of Arlington National Cemetery, extending its useful life beyond the projected closing date of 2025 so that in-ground burials of veterans can continue until approximately the year 2041. Chairman STUMP also cared passionately about preserving the integrity of the Nation's premier National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia. During the 105th, 106th, and 107th Congress, BOB STUMP sponsored legislation that was approved by the entire House of Representatives to codify eligibility requirements for Arlington. His legislation would have preserved eligibility for career service members while denying eligibility to Members of Congress who did not have the requisite military service.

For these and all of the other measures which Chairman STUMP helped to move through this and many preceding Congresses,

I extend the gratitude of the millions of veterans of this nation who benefited so much from BOB STUMP's leadership. We all wish him the very best as he returns to his home in Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, I urge approval of this Conference Report. It deserves to become part of BOB STUMP's legislative legacy.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4546, the Fiscal Year 2003, National Defense Authorization Act. It represents a down payment on military readiness sustainment that we all recognize as critical to national security.

It is not a perfect bill. I wish more money were available to address some of the readiness matters that have been deferred. I remain perplexed when I reflect on the impact that the resource shortages are having on every facet of our military. For example, we need to do more to ensure the readiness of our reserve components. Much more is required to adequately address the training readiness of our dedicated civilian workforce. The core infrastructure maintenance accounts remain short of the desired level of funds.

Let there be no doubt that this bill will not do all that needs to be done. But, Mr. Speaker, this bill is better than no bill.

I am especially pleased that we were able to reach some accommodations with the administration on concurrent receipt. At a time when we are preparing to become engaged in another conflict situation, we can ill afford not to address a matter that affects those who have already served. While concurrent receipt is not addressed as a directly related readiness matter, no one can deny that it does have a potential significant readiness impact. It is the right thing to do at this time. I urge my colleagues to support the conference report. Today provides another opportunity for us to do our part in providing for the national security of this great nation during a very trying period.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the conference report on the bill, H.R. 4546.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the conference report was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

9896. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the

Department's final rule — Amendment to the Beef Promotion and Research Rules and Regulations [No. LS-99-20] received November 4, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

9897. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Oranges, Grapefruit, Tangerines, and Tangelos Grown in Florida; Exemption for Shipments of Tree Run Citrus [Docket No. FV02-905-4 IFR] received November 4, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

9898. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Oranges and Grapefruit Grown in Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas; Decreased Assessment Rate [Docket No. FV02-906-1 IFR] received November 4, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

9899. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Kiwifruit Grown in California; Increased Assessment Rate [Docket No. FV02-920-4 FR] received November 4, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

9900. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Oranges, Grapefruit, Tangerines, and Tangelos Grown in Florida; Removing Dancy and Robinson Tangerine Varieties From the Rules and Regulations [Docket No. FV02-905-3 FIR] received November 4, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

9901. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Irish Potatoes Grown in Certain Designated Counties in Idaho, and Malheur County, Oregon, and Irish Potatoes Imported Into the United States; Modification of Handling and Import Regulations [Docket No. FV00-945-2 FR] received November 4, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

9902. A letter from the Director, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Financial Crimes Enforcement Network; Anti-Money Laundering Programs for Financial Institutions (RIN: 1506-AA28) received October 29, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

9903. A letter from the Administrator, Rural Housing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Farm Labor Housing Technical Assistance (RIN: 0575-AC25) received October 29, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

9904. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Information Officer, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department of Treasury's Commercial and Government Activities Inventory in accordance with the Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

9905. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Acquisition Regulation: Contractor Performance Evaluations [FRL 7402-8] received October 29, 2002, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Government Reform.

9906. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fisheries; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna [I.D. 100702A] received